

HCS HB 219 -- PRIVATE PROBATION SERVICES

SPONSOR: Hill

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 10 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 13 to 0.

This bill specifies that in all cases utilizing private probation services, the cutoff concentrations utilized by the Department of Corrections' regarding drug and alcohol screening for clients must be used, and clients must not be required to travel in excess of 50 miles in order to attend their regular probation meetings.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that levels should be the same across the board, whether the drug or alcohol screening occurs for the Department of Corrections or for a private probation company, because, without that uniformity, individuals could have screenings show up as positive through one entity and negative through another. This bill would place private probation companies on the same level. Additionally, individuals should be able to meet their probation officers by being assigned to one of the 13 private probation companies closest to his or her home. Alternatively, a private probation officer could offer remote services around the state on a particular day so individuals could travel a shorter distance to meet with the officer. Oftentimes, probation meetings last just a few minutes, so it is difficult to have to drive several hours, round trip, for a meeting lasting no longer than a few minutes. It is also a financial burden on individuals who are not a threat to society.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hill; Michael Barrett, Public Defender; John M. DeFriesse.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that using the same cutoff concentrations would be fine, but being required to implement the same standards and procedures utilized by the Department of Corrections would be overly burdensome to these private probation companies. The state is not capable of supervising all individuals on probation and parole, so the state contracts out with private probation companies. Unfortunately, if the individuals are not paying for the services, the companies do not have the ability to continue servicing that probation. In those instances, the private companies will report to the court that there has been a failure to pay or that there has been a violation of probation.

Testifying against the bill was Eastern Missouri Alternative

Sentencing Service.

This bill is similar to HB 1584 (2016).